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18 May 1958

MEMORANDUM FOR THE DIRECTOR

SUBJECT: Outlook in France

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1. As of Sunday afternoon we see the following three factors as most important in the French situation:

- (a) The strong anti-Gaullist position of the Assembly, and the unexpected energy of Pflimlin's government;
- (b) the strengthened position of the opposition in Algeria, owing primarily to the arrival of Soustelle;
- (c) the promise of a pronouncement from de Gaulle on Monday.

2. We think it unlikely that de Gaulle will say anything on Monday which will persuade the Assembly to call him to power.

3. Hence we expect the Pflimlin government to remain in office, possibly shifting to Mollet as Prime Minister.

4. The two great problems immediately confronting it will be (a) the possibility of formidable rioting and disorder in Paris and other parts of France, and (b) the Algerian situation. We think that the security forces under Jules Moch can probably cope with the

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former, and that the army and civilian extremists in Algeria will not be in a position to overthrow the government in Paris. But we emphasize that this is a highly uncertain estimate; the chances that the Fourth Republic will come to an end in the next two or three weeks appear to us to be very close to even. If this occurs the immediate cause will probably be an outbreak of uncontrollable rioting in France.

FOR THE BOARD OF NATIONAL ESTIMATES

SHERMAN KENT

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